

NEW HAMPSHIRE FIRE STANDARDS & TRAINING COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF MEETING

June 3, 2004

(Approved July 21, 2004)

Members Present: Edward Murdough, Ronald O'Keefe, Scott Weden, David Duquette, Stephen Carrier, Al Burbank, Peter Russell, Joseph Butts, Corey Landry, Richard Mason.

Members Absent: Karen Schlitzer, Earl Sweeney, Roger Hatfield, John Hoglund, J. William Degan.

Others Present: *Division of Fire Standards & Training*--Bruce McPherson, Bureau Chief; Dennis Rosolen, Bureau Chief; Sue Prentiss, Bureau Chief; Eric Wilking, Captain; Heather Newland, Recording Secretary.
Division of Forests & Lands (DRED)—Philip Bryce, Director.
NH Federation of Fire Mutual Aids—Kevin Pratt, Chief, Raymond Fire Department.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Item 1. Call to Order. The meeting of the New Hampshire Fire Standards & Training Commission was called to order by Chair David Duquette at 10:03 a.m. on Thursday, June 3, 2004 at the Forest Society of NH, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH. Commissioner Murdough led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 2. Introduction. Chair Duquette introduced Director Philip Bryce from the Division of Forests & Lands. Director Bryce will be representing the Forest Protection Bureau for today's meeting.

II. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1. Firefighter I and II Curriculum Update.

Chair Duquette said that the Commission members needed to address the NFPA 1001 Visiting Committee's proposed changes to the Firefighter I and Firefighter II curriculums today.

Captain Eric Wilking asked that everyone refer to the “Summary of Proposed Changes, ” dated June 3, 2004, that the Visiting Committee put together. He reported that the Committee met five times, and that Commissioner Butts represented the Commission on that Committee. The years when changes have been made and proposed, and the hours that changed and are proposed are as follows (see attached Summary of Changes for module changes):

	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002 (Proposed)</u>
Firefighter IA	96	92	84
Firefighter IB	<u>88</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>108</u>
Firefighter I	184	188	192
Firefighter II	<u>104</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>104</u>
Certification Totals	288	288	296

Chair Duquette asked if the Committee discussed the portability of the flashover facility. Captain Wilking answered that there could be a concern. The classroom session can be done in any classroom, with the flashover practical being done at the Fire Academy, as they are doing now. When Captain McGovern sets up classes in the North Country, they are used to coming to Concord for the flashover simulator; most make it a weekend. He has not heard any negative feedback on that.

Commissioner Burbank asked why we waited until Firefighter II to offer the flashover simulator instead of doing it in Firefighter I. Captain Wilking replied that the students need to be comfortable with the air pack. We recommend that everyone complete Firefighter I before they do the flashover.

Commissioner Burbank stated that, for the record, he thinks the hours should be shifted. One of the things we should be teaching in Firefighter I is recognition of flashover. Otherwise students will be getting their Firefighter I certifications, and then they will be out fighting fires somewhere before they get their Firefighter II. Commissioner Carrier said he agrees on the value of the flashover simulator, but he disagrees with the difference between Firefighter I and Firefighter II. It's been his understanding that a Firefighter I should always be accompanied by an officer or somebody else, and that's the person who needs to understand a flashover. A Firefighter II should be able to work without a lot of oversight, and needs to have those skills.

Commissioner Russell asked if it would make sense, after a person has fulfilled Firefighter I, that we suggest and offer the flashover as an additional exercise, whether on a Saturday or a Sunday, or whenever. Director Mason answered that it's available for any departments right now anyway. Commissioner Russell asked if we could do a little more communication on the availability.

Commissioner Burbank said he just wanted to make it known, but he understands the rationality here. He thinks, especially in the volunteer

departments, in the perfect world they would move to Firefighter II, but it doesn't happen. The trailer brings home what can happen.

Commissioner Weden stated that he concurs with Commissioner Burbank knowing the volunteer service and knowing during the day in the volunteer service, most departments aren't going to get an officer and most departments aren't going to get anybody who is more than Firefighter I or IA at times. If we are looking at firefighter safety, they should be exposed to flashover simulations because they are going to be the first line in. Chair Duquette said that fire departments can currently request to use the flashover simulator as long as they have the appropriate equipment. That can be arranged without a firefighter certification program going on. Director Mason said that we do have fire departments doing that now. He suggested they look at the topics in Firefighter IA and IB. Fire Control I is 16 hours in Firefighter IB. Then Fire Control II is 28 hours in Firefighter II. He asked if we are giving a false sense of security by using the flashover simulator in Firefighter I. He thinks the simulator is more an advanced skill. Commissioner Landry concurred with Director Mason. You have to make sure we have the basics. Commissioner Weden stated that he agrees with Commissioner Landry, but he was just looking for some exposure so they have a better understanding. He has seen firefighters who have been through IA or have been through IA and IB, who have gone into the simulator and come out with a horrific look on their faces. He would like them to have some exposure, not take the entire class. Commissioner Russell asked if there was a way we could offer exposure and not do an entire class; how does it work when fire departments petition to use it, and do the students have to all be IA and IB certified. He would like to see the simulator training advertised. Commissioner O'Keefe asked if there is a liability to the Fire Academy if students go into a prop without proper training. Director Mason said that students have to have prerequisite training, which has to be documented before they come in for the simulator training. Commissioner O'Keefe asked what the definition of "exposure" is. Commissioner Weden questioned, if a department wants to come down to use the simulator, what certifications do those individuals have to have. Director Mason replied that they have to go through the training for it. Chief Rosolen noted that they need four hours of training before they go in, where they review flashover and fire behavior. Chief McPherson said that the program itself is an eight-hour program, with four hours of classroom instruction that can be delivered at the Academy or at their department, followed by four hours of practical training.

Commissioner Weden said that we allow some uncertified students to go through the program, but we don't teach the program until Firefighter II. Commissioner Butts said that the Standard does not recognize the standard until Firefighter II. We expose them to flashover and fire behavior, and bring it all home together in Firefighter II. Commissioner Weden said he agrees with what we are doing with Firefighter I and Firefighter II; his problem is having uncertified students in the simulator without proper training, just having a four-hour classroom and then getting into the prop. He thinks they

should all have the proper training before they can enter the simulator. Commissioner O'Keefe said that Commissioner Weden makes a good point, and maybe we shouldn't allow it unless the student has Firefighter I certification. Director Mason stated that we follow the curriculum by the company that we bought it from. We are operating probably in a safer condition than many others that he knows about, because to his knowledge we haven't wrecked any gear or had any burns in some time. We did when we first started it. Director Mason said his only question is, and he's had this conversation with chiefs in smaller towns, there are people who will never become Firefighter I because of the length of time they have been on the department or what they have done on the department, and now we will say to them that they can't participate in this type of training. You can take a 184-hour class if you want to train in this prop. Commissioner Landry said he can see Commissioner Weden's point; but he agrees with Director Mason. If you go to tonight's legislative public hearing, you will hear the same thing. If we do this at tonight's hearing, next year we will hear that we're not using the props the way we are supposed to. These props should be available.

Chief Rosolen stated that, in going through the flashover simulator, you are going through as a trainee. You're not fighting a fire. There is a trained instructor who is there with a hose on, along with a safety officer. They control that fire. You are there on your knees observing and looking around. If there is ever any problem, there are at least three other doors and they are opened immediately. We have had less accident reports from the flashover program than from the Fire Control program. It's pretty much a safe environment. We have learned over the years how to do it safely. Commissioner Weden said he doesn't doubt the safety at the Fire Academy, that it's top notch, it is the best. His concern is that they will send a group of students down to do this who are uncertified. It's the safest environment they can have while they are at your facility. Then the students go back to their towns and now they are qualified because big brother showed them how to use an SCBA and qualified because they went to the Fire Academy for the fire simulator. Are we not providing them with a false sense of security or their perception of safety. Now we are setting them up to go into a building that isn't going to be that environment and putting them in harm's way where they could get injured.

Commissioner Burbank stated that, having been around mostly volunteer service all his life, it's his belief—and everyone will hear this for the remainder of his tenure—that we should be teaching, from the day that we introduce students to a set of fire gear, how to protect themselves. How to recognize stuff from the earliest moment. We all know that most of the stuff that gets us in trouble in the fire service is freelancing or hot dogging, and not recognizing what's going on in the building or relying on someone else to tell us. In most of the places, that's what got firefighters killed. With all the work that has been done, he thinks that the things that we know kill firefighters is should be introduced early in training even if we have to move something else

to Firefighter II. He feels that this should come early in the training as students don't recognize danger until they are in over their heads.

Commissioner Russell asked if, during the four-hour classroom session, do we actually have a segment there where we bring the firefighters in to show a video on how dangerous it can be and what can happen. Chief Rosolen replied that there is a video that is a part of the four-hour classroom, and students do not go in the simulator unless they have seen this video. It also shows that you don't necessarily see the flame and that is voiced there too. He noted he thinks that this video is well done.

Motion was made by Commissioner Landry, seconded by Commission O'Keefe, to accept the Firefighter I and Firefighter II curriculums as presented by the Visiting Committee.

Director Mason noted that there is a procedural issue. We have to bear in mind that Firefighter I and Firefighter II have to do with the certification of full-time firefighters; thus being a change. He doesn't think there is an issue if we allow two pilots of this. But this has to go on the table for 60 days for two public hearings, one in the daytime and one in the evening. He suggested that the final vote be held at the September Commission meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Landry, seconded by Commissioner O'Keefe, to amend the original motion by approving two pilot programs for the new Firefighter I and Firefighter II curriculums, setting it on the table for 60 days, and scheduling the two public hearings.

Director Mason said that the only thing he was going to bring up, and he would be negligent in his duties if he didn't in the seat that he's had for almost eight years, if they mandate anything at the Fire Academy, he hopes he is not the one sitting alone trying to defend it. Director Mason said that we really need to advertise well the changes we are making. Commissioner Russell said that a selling point is the Firefighter I-A has the same number of hours as before.

A vote by raise of hands was called for on the amendment, and the amendment passed. The original motion then passed.

Item 2. Pro-Board Visit. Chair Duquette said that the Pro-Board staff members will be arriving at the Fire Academy at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, June 7. He asked if any Commission members would be available to meet with the Pro-Board staff members from approximately 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. that morning. Commissioner Weden answered that he would try to be available. Chief Rosolen said that the Pro-Board staff would like to meet some Commission members and have a discussion with them. They would like to have at least two Commission members to show that, in fact, we do have good support from the Commission.

Item 3. July and August Commission Meetings. Chair Duquette noted that the Commission members typically don't meet in July and August. However, we need to hold a public hearing in July for the entrance examination to change the height of the aerial ladder climb and the length the test will stay in effect. July 2, which is the start of the 4th of July weekend, would be the earliest the public hearing could be held. It was recommended that it be held July 6, 7, or 8. We will need a quorum for that hearing on the Administrative Rules. Director Mason said we could hold it on Tuesday, July 6 at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., and provide dinner in between those two times.

Director Mason asked if July 6 will be just for that vote on the entrance examination changes, or do we want to try for Firefighter I and Firefighter II also. We would need a quorum for that also. It was agreed to hold both on July 6.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Burbank, seconded by Commissioner Weden, to recess for the Commission Retreat at 10:40 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Mason, Director